



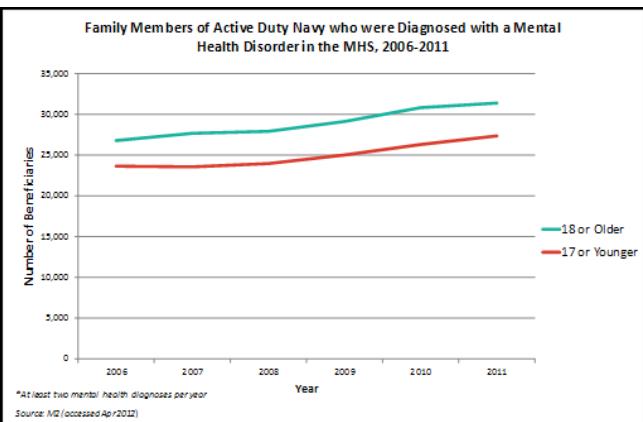
Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center "Quick Hits"



May 2012

Family Matters—Focus on Mental Health

The effects of deployment on the mental health and wellbeing of our service men and women are well documented. Enduring unique stressors such as time away from loved ones, uncertainty of the future, and long hours inevitably pose tough challenges for individuals to handle. Furthermore, a prolonged wartime environment increases the risk for developing adverse mental health conditions. As we continue to learn more, it has become evident that the families of front-line war-fighters also face challenges that require a unique approach for providers and health promotion professionals. Mental health diagnoses continue not only for active duty members, but among their family members as well. As a result, ***it is critical that leadership understand the needs of military health system beneficiaries.*** By addressing the psychological health needs of family members, we can strengthen the feeling of security for our sailors, ensuring a fitter force.



In support of the Wounded, Ill and Injured program, the [Health Analysis Department \(HA\)](#) staff collaborated with BUMED representatives to develop an analysis to assess active duty family member utilization of military health system mental health services. The analysis investigated trends in diagnoses and location of clinic visits related to mental health. The first stage compared the top mental health diagnoses among adults and children of active duty Navy. The most common diagnoses among adults were depression and anxiety disorders. Attention deficit conduct and disruptive behavior were the most common mental health diagnosis among children (ages 17 years or younger), followed by

communication and anxiety disorders.

The second phase looked at where mental health visits were occurring. In both children and adults, it appeared that the majority of mental health encounters were taking place in non-mental health clinics. Among adults, mental health encounters frequently occurred in the family practice setting. For children, the pediatric setting appeared to play a large role in mental health treatment. ***This has significant implications for Navy Medicine as it identifies the need to ensure all providers are trained to spot and direct care for mental health conditions to ensure early detection and treatment.***

The information was presented at the [2012 Naval Combat and Operational Stress Control Conference in San Diego](#) with the hopes of identifying additional avenues to expand analysis. HA staff continues to focus its efforts on identifying new strategies to support efficient, effective delivery of healthcare.



POC and Links

- NMCPHC Homepage: <http://www.nmcphc.med.navy.mil/>
- HA Contact: health-analysis@nehc.mar.med.navy.mil.

